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CIA Denies Tie to Beirut Car Bombing

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WASHINGTON—CIA officials denied Monday that the agency trained a Lebanese security force that has been linked to a car bombing in which more than 80 people were killed in a Beirut suburb March 8.

But the CIA did not deny that it may have provided training to Lebanese counterterrorists unrelated to the car bombing. Nor did the agency's statement appear to satisfy some members of Congress who are demanding additional information about the counterterrorist effort.

The agency, responding to a Washington Post report that the bombing was carried out by people hired by a CIA-trained Lebanese counterterrorist unit, issued the following statement:

"The Central Intelligence Agency never conducted any training of Lebanese security forces related to the events described in the Washington Post article. It also had no foreknowledge of the bombing incident on March 8, 1985, which was mentioned in the article."

It added that the CIA "scrupulously observes" its requirement under law to inform the House and Senate intelligence committees of its activities.

Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), former vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said he was informed last year of the CIA's intention to establish "a small anti-terrorist effort" in the Middle East. But Moynihan, who left the committee in January, said he had no knowledge of events since then.

On Monday, Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), who replaced Moyni-

han as committee vice chairman, declined to comment specifically on the incident but said he hopes that the Senate Intelligence Committee will look into the matter soon in closed meetings.

"I am concerned that we are not moving fast enough on terrorism, that we don't have an adequate intelligence base and that the United States is going to be endangered until we do," he said. "If you look at the number of terrorist attacks that we've suffered, and our inability to go after the terrorists, we're obviously not prepared."

On Sunday, Leahy was quoted as saying that he had begun an independent inquiry into half a dozen CIA operations, including the counterterrorism effort in the Middle East. He said he was never told by the CIA about that effort but instead "found out about it on my own" about a month ago.

The chairman of the committee, Sen. Dave Durenberger (R-Minn.) said the panel intends to look into the subject of counterterrorism, but he emphasized that the inquiry was planned before the reports of a CIA link to the Beirut bombing.

"Effective oversight of the intelligence agencies is possible only when the committee operates quietly in a unified manner and in response to its own agenda—an agenda that is not set by the Washington Post or any other news organization," Durenberger said.

He admonished officials for leaking sensitive information to the press and expressed fear that the recent disclosures might jeopardize the willingness of the agency to keep Congress informed of its activities.

"It would be very unfortunate if continued public speculation about sensitive matters led, as it has tended to in the past, to a decrease in the candid exchange of information, which is at the heart of oversight," he said.

Meanwhile, two members of the House Judiciary Committee, Reps. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.) and Don Edwards (D-San Jose), introduced a resolution directing the CIA to provide Congress with documents pertaining to its counterterrorist activities in the Middle

East.

"In an area as volatile as the Middle East, we don't need to set loose foreign proxies to participate in ill-conceived operations," Schroeder said. "Where is the wisdom in financing hit squads in the Middle East, which is already a hair trigger?"

Lebanon's ambassador to the United States, Abdallah Bouhabib, told the Associated Press that he has not been informed of any American involvement in the attack and expressed concern that the Post story could put the lives of the remaining American diplomats in Beirut at risk.

The March 8 bombing killed and wounded dozens of bystanders near the residence of Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, a leader of the Hezbollah (Party of God), a militant Shia Muslim movement suspected of involvement in anti-American terrorist activities. Fadlallah was unhurt.

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